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# DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

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## REPORT TASK FORCE ON WOMEN IN THE MILITARY

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# DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

## REPORT

### TASK FORCE

#### ON

### WOMEN IN THE MILITARY

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## INTRODUCTION

Total force readiness requires that all military members, male and female, have an opportunity to develop their talent to the fullest. Because women are a minority of people in uniform (about 10 percent), special efforts are essential to establish that opportunity. Women must be able to compete fairly for assignment and promotion, look forward to rewarding careers if they so choose, and be full partners in the benefits of mutual respect among military members that are critical to the effectiveness of military organizations. Attaining those objectives has been complicated by a rapid increase in the number of women in uniform during the past decade and by legal restrictions concerning women in combat, but it is clear that in spite of those complications, military women represent an irreplaceably valuable part of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Department of Defense policy is specific with regard to the effects of the combat exclusion laws. Women are expected to be used in all roles except those explicitly prohibited by the law, and the law should be interpreted to allow as many as possible career opportunities to be kept open. Similarly, Defense policy is specific with regard to respect for women insofar as attitudes or actions constituting sexual harassment are concerned. Execution of those policies requires continuous and effective supervision.

Most methods of supervision are common to all large organizations: a clear joining of responsibility and authority at every level, reports, inspections, and various techniques to obtain direct information, such as surveys and personal involvement by leaders with their people. One unique way of keeping the Secretary of Defense personally informed concerning military women was the establishment in 1951 of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS). The DACOWITS consists of leaders from business, industry, education, the professions, and civic organizations. The DACOWITS' continuing concern for women's issues and problems, many of which they have identified through annual visits, interviews, and observations at numerous military installations, and their positive recommendations to the Secretary of Defense about these matters, have provided a particularly valuable view of how well the Department is doing in making military service rewarding for women.

The Secretary of Defense established this Task Force as a direct result of continuing concerns raised by the DACOWITS about

the full integration of women in the armed forces. The Secretary's direction was to address three primary topics: attitudes toward and treatment of women in the military, and their impact on the morale and quality of life for women; consistency in application of combat exclusion statutes and policies, and their impact on effective utilization of women; and the manner in which various force management policies may impact adversely on women's career development. Discussion and recommendations for action in response to that direction are contained in the sections that follow.



## **EXTRACT OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Task Force on Women in the Military recommends the Secretary of Defense take the following actions:

### **Section I. Attitudes Toward Women in the Services**

1. Address the problem of sexual harassment with the Service Secretaries and the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Chairman and Service Chiefs), requesting a reaffirmation of Departmental policy against harassment and an endorsement of the other recommendations in this report.

2. In an effort to improve sexual harassment assessment procedures, require that a specifically tailored DoD-wide survey be conducted in 1988 and periodically thereafter to determine the incidence of sexual harassment and the effectiveness of programs to combat it. Additionally, require that a climate assessment instrument be developed and made available to all Services for use by commanders in determining the perceptions of individual Service members under their command concerning the total work environment; and that a central repository be established for all sexual harassment studies/surveys which would collate findings and publish appropriate results to all the Services.

3. In the area of education and training, require that DoD and all Services adopt a standardized definition of sexual harassment through revision of current DoD directives; each Service review its emphasis on and adequacy of education and training concerning sexual harassment to ensure recurring high quality, professional instruction in all currently programmed training, and expand such programs where deficiencies are found; each Service develop new materials and techniques to improve existing instructional methods and ensure that instruction occurs at all levels of the organization; and, DoD review equal opportunity lessons learned for use in combating sexual harassment. The results of such a review would be provided all Services for inclusion in their affirmative action plans or other appropriate utilization.

4. In an effort to improve enforcement of sexual harassment policies, require the Services to review, and modify

as necessary, their formal complaint systems to ensure that each Service:

a. Has a formal backup procedure that supplements the chain of command when the local commander is not responsive.

b. Repeatedly publicizes the Service systems for readily identifying and processing allegations of sexual harassment.

c. Takes measures to minimize any intimidating features of the reporting system and ensure its easy access.

d. Takes measures to ensure that the system provides responsive, timely action on the complaint and provides appropriate feedback to the complainant.

e. Emphasizes the importance of support for the system from the entire chain of command.

The Task Force further recommends that each Military Department provide a written report on the results of this review and actions to be taken to comply with (a) through (e) described above. The report should be submitted for approval of the Secretary of Defense within three months of acceptance of this recommendation.

5. We recommend that each Service make a special evaluation of facilities and services in locations where women are a small minority of the military population to determine what action may be necessary to eliminate conditions that detract from Servicewomen becoming full and equal members of their units. Each Service should be required to report the results of these evaluations and corrective actions to the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Force Management & Personnel).

6. We recommend that ASD (Health Affairs) review DoD policies that restrict the assignment or availability of medical personnel who provide medical care primarily to women. This review should consider changes to medical force mix that are needed to provide adequate health care for active duty women. ASD (HA) should submit a plan of action and milestones to the Secretary of Defense for approval.

7. We recommend that each Military Department evaluate its use of OB/GYN assets to ensure that the legal requirement of priority medical care for active duty patients is well-known and

properly enforced. Each Service should be required to report to ASD (HA) evaluation results and proposed corrective action.

8. We recommend that the DoD Directive covering policies for on-base entertainment be changed to incorporate more explicit and well-defined standards of good taste.

## Section II. Combat Exclusion

1. Issue guidance to the Secretaries of the Military Departments on the definition of combat missions which excludes women from combat positions and units in each Service as required or implied by statutes. In addition, the guidance should state that noncombat units can be also closed to women on grounds of risk of exposure to direct combat, hostile fire, or capture, provided that the type, degree, and duration of risk is equal to or greater than that experienced by associated combat units (of similar land, sea, or air type) in the same theaters of operation.

a. Direct the Secretary of the Army to review the use of battlefield location in light of this rule, and in particular to review opening those brigade positions which, like forward support battalions, experience less risk than regular combat battalions.

b. Direct the Secretary of the Navy to incorporate the new risk rule into the new definition of combat mission, and to assess the opening of CLF ships in light of this rule. In addition, the Navy's new definition of combat mission should clearly specify those conditions (e.g., travel with the battle group) which establish equal risk and therefore closes non-combat ships to women.

c. Direct the Secretary of the Air Force to review the portions of its regulations that close positions with a "high probability of exposure to hostile fire and substantial risk of capture." This risk condition should be modified to reflect the comparison of risk to combat aircraft, and to change policy with regard to assignment of women accordingly. It is expected that some currently closed reconnaissance aircraft would remain closed, while others would be opened. The risk condition applied to non-flying forces should be similarly evaluated.

d. Require reports to the Secretary of Defense on the changes of definitions and the positions opened to women as a

result of these changes within 3 months of acceptance of this report.

2. Approve Navy's opening of VQ1/2 aircraft to women and request that the Military Departments open the following positions to women: Navy Mobile Construction Battalions, Marine Corps Security Guard and Security Forces, and Air Force Red Horse and Aerial Port Squadrons.

3. Assure the Military Departments that, in order to maintain and protect readiness levels, all women serving in positions validated by the definitional changes described above will remain in those positions in the event of mobilization or other national emergencies.

### Section III. Career Development

1. Direct the Secretaries of the Military Departments to address the issue of women officer leadership development and key billet/command assignment, along with each Chief of Service, as a matter of priority.

2. Direct the Secretaries of the Military Departments to develop a comprehensive plan to integrate non-traditional skill areas with enlisted women, with explicit focus on recruiting and assignment policies. These plans should be submitted to the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Force Management & Personnel) for review.

## Section I

### ATTITUDES TOWARD WOMEN IN THE SERVICES

The Task Force addressed two general topics as a part of considering attitudes toward women in the Services: sexual harassment and quality of life for women. We shall report on our findings and recommendations in that order.

#### A. APPROACH

Given the clear statement of overall Department of Defense policy mentioned in the introduction and the considerable body of information available from the DACOWITS and other sources, the Task Force focused on the degree to which policy and policy implementation in each of the Services conformed with Defense guidance. The factual basis for findings and recommendations was provided primarily by numerous DACOWITS reports, oral briefings from DACOWITS members who took part in field trips, Service survey results, and presentations from Service representatives.

#### B. SEXUAL HARASSMENT

##### 1. General Findings

The Task Force found that sexual harassment remains a significant problem in all Services. Institutional efforts to prevent sexual harassment have been vigorous and sincere, but not totally effective. Although incidents involving higher command levels appear to be somewhat unusual, there are still a wide variety of less severe abuses including sexually offensive remarks and gestures. Sample surveys conducted in the Army and Air Force, a recently completed Navy assessment, reports of DACOWITS members and a substantial body of anecdotal evidence, although somewhat different among the Services, support this conclusion. More precise documentation of rates and types of sexual harassment is hampered by lack of a uniform, DoD-wide definition of sexual harassment and uniform assessment procedures.

Sexual harassment continues in spite of clear policy guidance, including three policy statements issued by the Secretary of Defense in the past six years and in spite of specific policies and programs developed to combat it. While the problem of sexual harassment is not unique to the Military Services, the

Task Force concludes that more can be done to prevent it and to mitigate its effects when it does occur.

The specific Task Force findings are grouped under the areas of command emphasis, assessment procedures, education and training, and enforcement.

## 2. Command Emphasis

Throughout our discussions, Task Force members repeatedly stressed the importance of leadership and command emphasis as the most critical factors in solving and, indeed, precluding human relations problems that lead to sexual harassment. A strong, aggressive commitment must first be made at the top of the chain of command, and all command levels must be held accountable.

## 3. Assessment Procedures

One of the major problems the Task Force encountered throughout its deliberation is the limited amount of useful information regarding the extent of sexual harassment in each Service. Although the Air Force and Army conduct annual surveys that cover the broader topics of quality of life and equal opportunity, the thrust of each survey changes annually as the Services change their focus. The Navy and Marine Corps have conducted only occasional surveys that touch on the issue. Their information is dated and precludes historic tracking. Absence of a uniform, periodic survey hampers realistic assessment of the problem and monitoring of solutions.

Another difficulty in assessment is a lack of consistency in the way each Service reports sexual harassment statistics. This aspect of the problem is being addressed through implementation of a recent DoD Directive requiring each Service to report information on sexual harassment complaints as part of its Annual Military Equal Opportunity Assessment. The first of these standardized reports is due in February 1989.

## 4. Education and Training

Service briefings on existing education and training programs concerning sexual harassment revealed that the emphasis varies considerably among the Services. For example, during basic training one Service covers the subject of sexual harassment prevention as a separate topic, one addresses it as part of equal opportunity training, and another addresses it as part of rights and responsibilities training. Members of each Service spend a differing amount of training time on this topic and each Service uses different definitions of sexual harassment, thereby

hampering creation of effective and uniform policies throughout DoD.

## 5. Enforcement.

The Task Force reviewed existing enforcement and complaint channels, including the Chain of Command, the Inspector General, Equal Opportunity Staffs, Request Mast, Chaplains, Local Commander's Hotline, Legal Counsel, filing of a complaint under Article 138 (complaints of wrongs) of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, and letters to Congress.

The Task Force determined that all Services have enforcement and complaint procedures, but that their effectiveness varies. In some instances, procedures do not appear well-known to Service members, especially more junior members. In other instances, the procedures are known but not well-used, apparently because of concern that filing a complaint might adversely impact the member's career or bring retribution. Reluctance to use the chain of command is judged especially true when some level of the chain is perceived as a participant in, or thought to condone, pejorative attitudes toward military women. These predominant formal complaint systems include the following:

a. Army - the use of the Equal Opportunity Staff for initial complaints, with the Inspector General available for complaints not resolved by the immediate chain of command.

b. Navy/Marine Corps - the Request Mast system, in which the complainant may request mast with any commander in the chain of command.

c. Air Force - the use of the Social Actions Office, which accepts complaints on all matters and ensures that problems are inserted back into the chain of command at the appropriate level for resolution.

## C. QUALITY OF LIFE

### 1. General Findings

There is no doubt that the quality of life of each Service member contributes to or detracts from the readiness of the Services on a daily basis and is a long-term readiness issue in its affect on individual and unit morale and the retention of Service members. It is clear that the Services have expended considerable resources in efforts to improve the quality of life of all Service members and their families. As women were integrated into a predominantly male culture, however, the results of that integration raised issues that have been dealt with unevenly

within each Service. Because all quality of life issues from the DACOWITS' reports on its trips to Europe and the Pacific are being addressed separately by each Service involved, the Task Force again focused on the broader policy aspects of these issues.

The Task Force identified three broad quality of life issues that deserve special emphasis: facilities and services, medical care, and entertainment policies.

## 2. Facilities and Services

The issue of appropriate facilities for female Service members seems to arise predominantly in areas formerly occupied almost exclusively by men. Barracks, gymnasiums, clubs, day rooms, Base Exchange stocking policies, transportation and haircuts at various locations were presented as examples of facilities and services that were relatively adequate for male Service members but were less-than-adequate for a mixed force. Problems with these facilities and services included availability, adequacy, security, privacy and location. As a result, certain facilities and services are not equal for men and women in those locations, and in some cases, women members perceive themselves, and may be perceived by others, as less than full members of the team.

## 3. Medical Care

Two problems surfaced to the Task Force under this heading:

a. A perception that dependents in some areas receive preferential treatment.

b. A perception that the Services do not have enough OB/GYN doctors and, in certain areas, female enlisted medical technicians, to provide the required care both to female Service members and female dependents.

Examples to support both of these perceptions were presented by DACOWITS executive committee reports. A common concern has been expressed in many locations that the medical system appeared to treat female Service members as less important, or with lower priority, than female dependents. Service members have noted unacceptable waiting times to see an OB/GYN specialist. Some women are using civilian doctors to complete their physicals rather than waiting for an appointment with a Service doctor.

## 4. On-base Entertainment



The third significant issue affecting quality of life concerns on-base entertainment and the promotion of, or at least the tolerance of, an atmosphere denigrating to women at some overseas locations. This has been primarily observed in the form of sexually suggestive entertainment in some club facilities. The Task Force reviewed current directives and noted that, although each Service directs that on-base entertainment must be wholesome and in good taste, each policy statement contains different emphasis and specifics.

#### D. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our review, the Task Force recommends that the Secretary of Defense take the following actions:

1. Address the problem of sexual harassment with the Service Secretaries and the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Chairman and Service Chiefs), requesting a reaffirmation of Departmental policy against harassment and an endorsement of the other recommendations in this report.

2. In an effort to improve sexual harassment assessment procedures, require that:

- a. A specifically tailored DoD-wide survey be conducted in 1988 and periodically thereafter to determine the incidence of sexual harassment and the effectiveness of programs to combat it.

- b. A climate assessment instrument be developed and made available to all Services for use by commanders in determining the perceptions of individual Service members under their command concerning the total work environment.

- c. A central repository be established for all sexual harassment studies/surveys which would collate findings and publish appropriate results to all the Services.

3. In the area of education and training, require that:

- a. DoD and all Services adopt a standardized definition of sexual harassment through revision of current DoD directives.

- b. Each Service review its emphasis on and adequacy of education and training concerning sexual harassment to ensure recurring high quality, professional instruction in all currently

programmed training, and expand such programs where deficiencies are found.

c. Each Service develop new materials and techniques to improve existing instructional methods and ensure that instruction occurs at all levels of the organization.

d. DoD review equal opportunity lessons learned for use in combating sexual harassment. The results of such a review would be provided all Services for inclusion in their affirmative action plans or other appropriate utilization.

4 In an effort to improve enforcement of sexual harassment policies, require the Services to review, and modify as necessary, their formal complaint systems to ensure that each Service:

a. Has a formal backup procedure that supplements the chain of command when the local commander is not responsive.

b. Repeatedly publicizes the Service systems for readily identifying and processing allegations of sexual harassment.

c. Takes measures to minimize any intimidating features of the reporting system and ensure its easy access.

d. Takes measures to ensure that the system provides responsive, timely action on the complaint and provides appropriate feedback to the complainant.

e. Emphasizes the importance of support for the system from the entire chain of command.

The Task Force further recommends that each Military Department provide a written report on the results of this review and actions to be taken to comply with (a) through (e) described above. The report should be submitted for approval of the Secretary of Defense within three months of acceptance of this recommendation.

5. We recommend that each Service make a special evaluation of facilities and services in locations where women are a small minority of the military population to determine what action may be necessary to eliminate conditions that detract from Service-women becoming full and equal members of their units. Each Service should be required to report the results of these evaluations and corrective actions to the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Force Management & Personnel).

6. We recommend that ASD (Health Affairs) review DoD policies that restrict the assignment or availability of medical personnel who provide medical care primarily to women. This review should consider changes to medical force mix that are needed to provide adequate health care for active duty women. ASD (HA) should submit a plan of action and milestones to the Secretary of Defense for approval.

7. We recommend that each Military Department evaluate its use of OB/GYN assets to ensure that the legal requirement of priority medical care for active duty patients is well-known and properly enforced. Each Service should be required to report to ASD (HA) evaluation results and proposed corrective action.

8. We recommend that the DoD Directive covering policies for on-base entertainment be changed to incorporate more explicit and well-defined standards of good taste.

## SECTION II

### COMBAT EXCLUSION

#### A. APPROACH

The Task Force mission on this topic was to evaluate the impact of "consistency in application" of exclusion statutes and policies rather than questioning the combat exclusion itself. The Secretary of Defense has previously taken the position that the law regarding combat exclusion reflects a fundamental social issue more properly addressed by the Congress.

The Task Force began by reviewing and discussing three levels of policy: the statutes, Secretary of Defense policy guidance, and the Services' policies and interpretations of policy. The review then continued with a series of presentations by Service representatives on specific jobs and units that were closed to women and the reasons for closure under existing policies and interpretations.

Taking combat exclusion law as given, the problem before the Task Force was to review the implementation of these statutes, and to address two specific questions: (1) the consistency in application from one Service to another, and (2) the consistency of Service policies with prior Secretary of Defense policy guidance on combat exclusion.

#### B. THE LAW AND DOD POLICY

The legal requirement for combat exclusion arises from two separate statutes, one applying to the Navy and Marine Corps and one to the Air Force:

1. Title 10, U.S.C. 6015 stipulates that "Women may not be assigned duty on vessels or in aircraft that are engaged in combat missions nor may they be assigned to other than temporary duty on vessels of the Navy except hospital ships, transports, and vessels of similar classification not expected to be assigned to combat missions."

2. Title 10, U.S.C. 8549 states, "Female members of the Air Force, except those designated under section 8067 of this title, or appointed with a view to designation under that section, may not be assigned to duty in aircraft engaged in combat missions."

There is no statutory provision that applies explicitly to the Army, but the Secretary of the Army has developed policies for excluding women from routine engagement in direct combat. The implied congressional intent behind the Navy and Air Force statutes is cited by the Army as the basis for its exclusion policies.

The interpretation and application of these statutes generally has been left to the Service Secretaries and Military Departments; there are no DoD directives or regulations that pertain to combat exclusion at this time. The Secretary of Defense has, however, issued broad guidance from time to time to the Military Departments regarding combat exclusion. The most recent statement of policy was issued in 1985; it became a major criterion by which the Task Force evaluated Service policies. The guidance states:

"Military women can and should be utilized in all roles except those explicitly prohibited by the combat exclusion statutes and related policy. The combat exclusion rule should be interpreted to allow as many as possible career opportunities for women to be kept open."

#### C. DEFINITIONS OF COMBAT MISSIONS

The statutes establish only minimum criteria for excluding women from military positions; namely, ships and aircraft with combat missions. Nothing in the law prohibits the Services from applying combat exclusion policies to units other than ships or aircraft, and all Services have done so.

More important, the law does not define "combat mission." The task has been left to the Department of Defense, and in fact to each Military Service. Given the differences in mission, organization, and operational practice, it is not surprising that the Services have developed differing definitions of combat mission, and that these definitions have changed over time in response to changes in military doctrine, technology, and utilization of forces.

Not all differences in combat exclusion policies, however, arise from Service differences in combat forces. The differences of greatest concern to the Task Force arise from specific interpretations of the law (in all Services) concerning placing women at risk of exposure to hostile fire or capture. While the statutes do not mention such risks, their legislative histories can support the view that Congress intended the combat exclusion laws to protect women from the most serious risks of harm or capture.

The Task Force has several problems with the "risk" interpretation of the law. First, it has led to exclusion of women from noncombat positions or units that are not explicitly covered by the language of the statutes, thereby making such exclusions somewhat broader than the narrowest reading of the Secretary of Defense's 1985 guidance. Second, since each Service has different risk thresholds, it has led to inconsistent exclusions from one Service to another; that is, similar positions or units in two or more Services that are open in one Service but closed in another.

Finally, the Task Force is concerned whether changing war-fighting doctrine, emerging technologies, and global strategies justify the use of risk of harm or capture alone as a primary criterion for identifying assignments precluded because of the combat exclusion, at least without some clear connection to combat. Women are currently utilized in units or theaters of operation in which they will be exposed to substantial risk of hostile fire or capture, depending on specific wartime scenarios. Examples include Army rear-of-brigade artillery and forward support battalions; Air Force ground launched cruise missile (GLCM) sites; airborne early warning and control systems; refueling tankers; and, Military Sealift Command ships that travel to and supply battle groups

In the following sections the Task Force will discuss Service policies in more detail and comment on specific positions that raise consistency problems from one Service to another. But the larger and more important challenge is to review our definitions of combat mission to arrive at policies more consistent with the Secretary's 1985 guidance, and in particular to address the use of risk in the closure of noncombat positions to women.

The Task Force believes that the Secretary of Defense should develop more explicit guidance about how combat missions should be defined and to specify the way in which risk can be considered when assessing noncombat units and positions for closure to women.

In order to maintain a proper nexus to combat, the guidance should state that risks of direct combat, exposure to hostile fire, or capture are proper criteria for closing noncombat positions or units to women, providing that the type, degree, and duration of such risks are equal to or greater than the combat units with which they are normally associated within a given theater of operations. If the risk of noncombat units or positions is less than comparable to land, air, or sea combat units with which they are associated, then they should be open to women.

Given this rule for the use of risk, the definitional areas in greatest need of review are the Army's use of battlefield location; the Air Force's use of exposure to hostile fire (or hostile territory) and risk of capture; and the Navy's application of combat mission to groups of ships rather than individual vessels as specified in its statute.

#### D. SERVICE POLICIES

Having reviewed the statutes, Secretary of Defense policy guidance, and definitions of combat missions, what follows is a review of current policy and policy interpretations for each of the Services.

##### 1. Army

Title 10, U.S.C. 3012 gives the Secretary of the Army authority to determine assignment policy for all Army personnel. As such there are no statutory restrictions on Army assignment policy. The Secretary of the Army has stated that women will be assigned in all skills and positions except those which involve the highest probability of direct combat with enemy forces. He has defined direct combat as "engaging an enemy with individual or crew-served weapons while being exposed to direct enemy fire, a high probability of direct physical contact with the enemy, and a substantial risk of capture. Direct combat takes place while closing with the enemy by fire, maneuver, or shock effect in order to destroy or capture, or while repelling assault by fire, close combat, or counterattack."

Pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 3012 and considering the statutes affecting women of the Air Force and Navy, the Secretary of the Army developed the Direct Combat Probability Coding System (DCPC) in 1983. Under the DCPC, every position in the Army is evaluated based upon the duties of the Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) or Area of Concentration (AOC), and the unit's mission, tactical doctrine, and location on the battlefield. Each position is then coded based upon the probability of engaging in direct combat, with P1 representing the highest probability and P7, the lowest. DCPC restricts women from serving in P1 positions.

DCPC codes positions, not units or MOS or AOC. However, a unit containing only P1 positions is "closed" to assignment of women. For example, all positions in Infantry and Armor Battalions are coded P1 so Infantry and Armor Battalions are "closed." Similarly an MOS or AOC for which all positions are coded P1 is closed. Infantryman and Tank Crewmember are obvious examples, for every position has a direct combat mission. Another MOS or AOC may be closed because the number and/or grade distribution of

closed positions makes career progression/development in that career area impossible for women.

The DCPC system closes a number of noncombat positions or units primarily because of their location in the battlefield area. Units usually operating forward of the brigade-rear are closed, while units operating generally behind brigade-rear are open.

## 2. NAVY

A strict reading of the Navy statute precludes assignment of women to duty on vessels or in aircraft that are engaged in combat missions. Navy policy on combat exclusion is articulated in SECNAVINST 1300.12 which states, "women will not be assigned to combat duty. . .," nor will they be assigned to vessels or aircraft that are engaged in "combat missions." Women "may be permanently assigned to duty in hospital ships, transports, training ships, and vessels of a similar classification not expected to be assigned combat missions." Further, they "may be assigned to temporary duty to any ship or squadron in the Navy provided that unit is not expected to have a combat mission during the period of temporary duty." SECNAVINST 1300.12 further defines combat mission as "one that has as one of its primary objectives to seek out, reconnoiter, or engage the enemy."

In execution of its policy, Navy includes under "combat mission" not only ships and aircraft, but also "units" or "task organizations." This further interpretation, not included in SECNAVINST 1300.12, was noted in a Deputy Secretary of Defense letter to members of Congress in 1978. "A combat mission is a mission of a unit, ship, aircraft or task organization which has as one of its primary objectives to seek out, reconnoiter, or engage an enemy." This interpretation of policy has been used to justify closure of Combat Logistics Force (CLF) ships to women because they are part of the "task organization" of, for example, a Carrier Battle Group. Although CLF ships have primary support rather than combat missions, the inclusion of "task organization" causes them to share the common combat mission with the battle group. The motivation was that CLF ships will sail in harm's way with the battle group and, based on Navy's estimate of enemy strategy and tactics, will be a high value unit sought by the enemy in a combat theater.

"Units" are included in the interpretation to cover SEALS and mobile construction battalions, although both may be covered by the exclusion from assignment "to combat duty." In addition, since the definition of combat is to seek out, reconnoiter, or engage the enemy, all reconnaissance aircraft have been closed to women on the basis of this definition.



The recently completed Navy study, as adopted by the Secretary of the Navy, proposes the following new definition of combat mission:

"A combat mission is defined as a mission of an individual unit, ship or aircraft that individually, or collectively as a naval task organization, has as one of its primary objectives to seek out, reconnoiter, and engage the enemy. The normal defensive posture of all operating units is not included within the definition."

The "or" between "reconnoiter" and "engage" has been changed to "and," thereby removing purely reconnaissance activities from combat. However, by keeping "task organization" in the definition, the Navy will still apply the definition of combat to groups of ships rather than individual vessels as implied by the statute. The Navy report further states that certain CLF ships will now be open to women, although the definition alone does not convey why some CLF ships will be open and others will be closed.

### 3. Marine Corps

Title 10, U.S.C. 6015 applies to the Marine Corps and precludes assignment of women to duty on vessels or in aircraft that are engaged in combat missions. SECNAVINST 1300.12 also applies and is refined in MCO 1300.8N which states women Marines will not be assigned to any unit within which they would likely become engaged in direct combat operations with the enemy, or to any assignment that has been designated by the Secretary of the Navy as requiring an armed combat trained Marine.

"Direct combat operations" are defined for assignment purposes as seeking out, reconnoitering, or engaging in offensive action. MCO 1300.8N also states combat exclusion rules prohibit women from being assigned to units with the greatest physical risk, such as infantry regiments and their sub-elements. The order goes on to say, "Women Marines may be assigned to any supporting establishment unit/duty station for which qualified by grade, MOS, or other special criteria, with the exception of Marine Security of United States Embassies or Consulates and any Marine Corps security force billet designated by the Secretary of the Navy as ". . . an armed, combat trained Marine." The additional exclusion of Security Guards and security forces is justified primarily on the possibility of combat or other risk of harm. However, no other Service closes such security positions to women, and there is no attempt to compare the risks of Marine Security Guards to that of regular Marine combat troops.

### 4. Air Force

The law, 10 U.S.C. 8549, states that female members of the Air Force may not be assigned to duty in aircraft engaged in combat missions. Air Force interprets the law and defines combat in AFR 35-60. AFR 35-60 precludes assignment of women to the following:

a. Aircraft whose principle mission involves aerial combat, defined as:

(1) Delivery of munitions or other destructive material against an enemy, or

(2) Aerial activity over hostile territory where enemy fire is expected and where risk of capture is substantial.

b. Duties or units where there is a probability of exposure to hostile fire and substantial risk of capture.

c. Instructor or staff positions where training or experience in combat aircraft is a prerequisite.

The first portion of the Air Force definition of "aerial combat" is similar to other Services, definition of combat; that is, "delivery of munitions. . . against an enemy." But the second component involving aerial activity over hostile territory, as well as the general exclusion of units where there is "a probability of exposure to hostile fire and substantial risk of capture," is unlike the other Services' definitions. As such, units and positions closed by this criteria are not specifically required by law. Moreover, there is no attempt to relate the degree of risk to the risk of combat units with which they are normally associated.

#### E. REVIEW OF SPECIFIC AREAS OF INTEREST

In our reviews to evaluate consistency, we recognized the need first to find inter-Service commonality in either skill, unit, type weapons systems or equipment before we could assess whether or not the Services exclusion policies were, in fact, consistent.

We reviewed the skills, units, systems and equipment in each Service to identify where commonality exists among two or more of the Services. (In skills alone there are over 739 officer skill classifications and 1137 enlisted skill classifications). Where we found commonality, we looked for differences among the Services in employment/exclusion policies affecting women. We also examined those areas closed to women based on Service criteria

not explicitly included in combat exclusion statutes and, where possible, applied the "risk" rule described in Section C.

We identified 29 specific areas where potential inconsistencies exist in application of policy, either between two or more Services or with Secretary of Defense guidance, and we studied Service rationale for either excluding or allowing women to serve. Of the 29 areas studied, we found Service policy conformed to both the law and DoD guidance in 22 of those areas. For these 22 areas, the apparent differences in employment policy were not considered inconsistent when viewed in the wartime environment projected by the Services.

The remaining seven areas of concern are discussed below:

1. Battlefield location as a criterion for determining combat exclusion in the Army

Prior to adoption of the DCPC system, Army women were excluded only from infantry, armor, cannon field artillery, combat engineer, and low altitude air defense units of battalion/squadron or smaller size. The problem was that some noncombat units (e.g., intelligence and signal units) operate habitually in the forward battlefield area, side-by-side with regular combat units and exposed to the same risks. Depending on conditions, women in such units could become involved in direct combat with the enemy. The inclusion of battlefield location in the DCPC system helps solve this problem.

When the DCPC system was adopted, a significant number of noncombat units and positions were closed to women due primarily to application of the battlefield location criterion. Even after special validation studies, an additional 11 MOS's and 159 units were closed that were open in the older system. Currently, the key distinction is between units that operate habitually forward of the brigade-rear, which, with one exception, are closed to women. The major exception is forward support battalions, which remain open to women even though they operate throughout the brigade area.

While the Task Force does not recommend deleting battlefield location from the DCPC equation, we believe it should be reviewed in light of the proposed "risk" rule to prevent closure of noncombatant units and positions to women without a clear nexus to direct combat mission. For example, the "equal risk" rule would probably justify closure of any noncombat unit that operates habitually forward of the battalion rear, such as forward intelligence and signal units. At the same time, it would justify opening of forward support battalions as well as numerous noncombat positions in the brigade headquarters.

## 2. Combat Logistics Force Ships (CLF)

Combat Logistics Force ships have been routinely considered by Navy to be vessels of a "task organization;" in this case the Carrier Battle Group, which has as a primary mission to seek out, reconnoiter, or engage the enemy. Neither 10 U.S.C. 6015 nor a literal interpretation of Navy's written policy precludes assignment of women to the CLF. The Navy's utilization of "task organization" as a qualifier appears to be the only criterion for exclusion. While the CLF is unique, the other Services generally view "logistic support" positions as properly open to women. There appears to be no legal objection to a revision of Navy policy, nor would change necessarily have any impact on units or organizations other than CLF. No written Navy regulations would have to be changed, since recent laws and regulations define combat mission for vessels, not groups of vessels.

The Navy's recent study recommendations and the Secretary of the Navy's decision to open some CLF ships to women is based on a distinction of mission within task organizations. Those logistics ships that "travel with the battle group" (11 ships of the AOE and AOR class) would remain closed to women, while those that are used in more of a shuttle operation between shore and the battle group (26 ships of the AFS, AO, and AE class) would be opened over time on a ship-by-ship basis.

This change represents a significant improvement in Navy policy. By drawing a better nexus to combat mission, Navy exclusion policy is brought into closer compliance with the 1985 Secretary of Defense guidance. The Task Force still has two concerns, however. First, the definition of combat mission does not make it clear what ships are open or closed to women; the condition of "traveling with the battle group" is not expressed in the definition of combat mission. Second, the condition of "traveling with the battle group" is not explicitly evaluated in terms of equal risk of hostile fire as combatant ships, although this may be the intended distinction.

## 3. Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadrons (VQ1/VQ2)

Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadrons (VQ1/VQ2) have as a primary mission the monitoring of intelligence signals by flying close to hostile territory. The mission fits the Navy definition of combat mission in that it reconnoiters the enemy. Title 10, U.S.C., Section 6015 does not preclude the assignment of women to VQ1 and VQ2; however, SECNAVINST 1300.12 prohibits assignment of women to any ship or aircraft squadron that has as its primary objective any one of the elements in its definition of a combat mission (i.e., seek out, reconnoiter, or engage the

enemy). The EP-3 aircraft flown by VQ1/VQ2 pilots operate close to hostile territory, generally not over that territory. While aircraft from these squadrons have been shot down in the past, they do not carry weapons and the risk of hostile fire is not considered as high as for combat aircraft.

It would not be legally objectionable to modify SECNAVINST 1300.12 such that women would be authorized to serve in VQ1 and VQ2. The only modification would be to change the word "or" to "and," which the Navy is proposing to do in its new policy proposal. The Task Force agrees with the recent Navy study that the VQ1/2 aircraft should be open to women, not only because similar types of aircraft are open in the Air Force, but because the risk of hostile fire or capture is lower than for combat aircraft of similar types.

#### 4. Naval Mobile Construction Battalions (NMCB)

Navy policy on combat exclusion in SECNAVINST 1300.12 says women "will not be assigned to combat duty..." It also says women will not be assigned to vessels or aircraft engaged in combat missions, but does not address other "units." As mentioned in paragraph C. above, the Navy has expanded the scope of combat exclusion by including "units" and "task organizations" along with ships and aircraft as being proper entities for exclusion of women should they become engaged in a combat mission.

NMCBs are heavy engineering units whose primary missions are construction and not combat. They generally arrive in a theater area after the main combat units and therefore, while they may be exposed to some risk of hostile fire, it is not in the same degree or duration as combat units. They are primarily support units which, if they engage the enemy at all, would do so only from a defensive posture. As such, in mission and utilization, NMCBs are substantially similar to Army heavy engineering units which are open to women.

The Task Force believes that NMCBs should be open to women, not only because of their similarity to Army heavy engineers, but also because their degree of risk is clearly lower than the combat units with which they are associated.

#### 5. Marine Security Guard (MSG) and Marine Corps Security Forces (MCSF)

Marine Security Guard duty involves protecting the physical security of United States Embassies and Consulates around the world. Marine Corps Security Force duty involves providing physical security for designated naval activities, to

include combatant ships. Women are excluded by law from those Marine Corps Security Force units assigned as part of the crew of a combatant ship.

The primary missions of Marine Security Guards and Marine Corps Security Forces at Naval Bases are guard duty rather than combat duty. Similar guard duty positions are open to women in the Army and Air Force. Given these similarities, the fact that security guards and forces are an exception to Marine Corps policy, and the lower risks of exposure to hostile fire and capture compared to Marine Corps combat units, the Task Force believes these positions should be open to women.

#### 6. Air Force Red Horse and Mobile Aerial Port Squadron

The closure of these units to women stem from the section of AFR 35-60 which precludes assignment of women to units where there is a high probability of exposure to hostile fire and substantial risk of capture, rather than direct combat roles. Red Horse and Mobile Aerial Port Squadrons are noncombatants that have risks similar to those of Army heavy engineers and Navy NMCBS, and these risks are less than the ground combat forces with which they are associated. The Task Force believes these units should be open to women on the same grounds that NMCBS should be open to women.

#### 7. Air Force Reconnaissance Aircraft

The law does not preclude assignment of women to reconnaissance aircraft. The existing closure of certain reconnaissance aircraft to women comes from the provision of AFR 35-60 that precludes women from assignment to "aerial activity over hostile territory where enemy fire is expected and where risk of capture is substantial." Because of missions over hostile territory, the Air Force closes both strategic reconnaissance aircraft (SR-71, U/TU-2, TR-1), as well as the following tactical reconnaissance and search/rescue aircraft to women: EF-111, C-141 (all missions), CH/HH-3, MH/CH/HH-53, UH/HH-60, HH-IN CA, UH-IN CA, C/EC/HC-130 (all mission), RF-4, O-2, OV-10, C-140 (all missions), and T-39 (all missions).

The Task Force believes that the hostile territory condition should not be deleted entirely, because this would open some reconnaissance aircraft where the risk of hostile fire or capture would be the same or greater than combat aircraft; a tactical reconnaissance aircraft such as the RF-4 is a good example. We believe, however, that the Air Force should review and revise its conditions for closing non-combat aircraft according to the "risk" rule described in Section C. Such a change may

well open strategic reconnaissance such as SR-71, U/TU-2, and TR-1.

F. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our review, the Task Force recommends that the Secretary of Defense take the following actions:

1. Issue guidance to the Secretaries of the Military Departments on the definition of combat missions which excludes women from combat positions and units in each Service as required or implied by statutes. In addition, the guidance should state that noncombat units can be also closed to women on grounds of risk of exposure to direct combat, hostile fire, or capture, provided that the type, degree, and duration of risk is equal to or greater than that experienced by associated combat units (of similar land, sea, or air type) in the same theaters of operation.

a. Direct the Secretary of the Army to review the use of battlefield location in light of this rule, and in particular to review opening those brigade positions which, like forward support battalions, experience less risk than regular combat battalions.

b. Direct the Secretary of the Navy to incorporate the new risk rule into the new definition of combat mission, and to assess the opening of CLF ships in light of this rule. In addition, the Navy's new definition of combat mission should clearly specify those conditions (e.g., travel with the battle group) which establish equal risk and therefore closes non-combat ships to women.

c. Direct the Secretary of the Air Force to review the portions of its regulations that close positions with a "high probability of exposure to hostile fire and substantial risk of capture." This risk condition should be modified to reflect the comparison of risk to combat aircraft, and to change policy with regard to assignment of women accordingly. It is expected that some currently closed reconnaissance aircraft would remain closed, while others would be opened. The risk condition applied to non-flying forces should be similarly evaluated.

d. Require reports to the Secretary of Defense on the changes of definitions and the positions opened to women as a result of these changes within 3 months of acceptance of this report.

2. Approve Navy's opening of VQ1/2 aircraft to women and request that the Military Departments open the following

positions to women: Navy Mobile Construction Battalions, Marine Corps Security Guard and Security Forces, and Air Force Red Horse and Aerial Port Squadrons.

3. Assure the Military Departments that, in order to maintain and protect readiness levels, all women serving in positions validated by the definitional changes described above will remain in those positions in the event of mobilization or other national emergencies.



### SECTION III

#### CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The Task Force addressed the manner in which various Force Management policies may impact adversely on women's career development.

##### A. APPROACH

The laws concerning combat exclusion result in assignment and classification differences based on gender, which in turn may impact on career development of women. Many billets and organizations are closed to women, so as women progress through the officer and enlisted grades their experiences and their career development differs from that of men. The Task Force accepted that some differences are the unavoidable result of the combat exclusion laws.

It seems probable, however, that inhibitors not directly related to the combat exclusion laws might exist and might be corrected. The probable causes for those inhibitors were believed to be both social and organizational. The Task Force reviewed the issues raised in recent years to identify those that seemed most intractable, of particular urgency, or particularly deserving of note in this report as a means of moving toward solutions.

##### B. GENERAL FINDINGS

The recommended changes to combat exclusion policies, if approved and implemented, will have a significant impact on career progression and career development both for women officers and enlisted women. Some of the policies currently in effect that constrain career progression and career development might be modified as a result of various recommendations of this report and actions already being taken in the military Services. The timing could be particularly appropriate for other desirable changes driven by recent events, resulting from long-standing concern within the Services, or simply resulting from a new look and the discovery of areas needing attention.

The Task Force elected to focus on two areas which, if given appropriate attention by all Services, would bring positive results. One concerns the leadership development and assignment

of women officers to key billets, the other addresses the integration of women who are assigned to the traditionally-male skill areas.

To take full advantage of changes that may result from the recommendations of this report and ongoing action within the Services, the Task Force believes that each of the Services should establish procedures that will result in women being assigned in greater numbers to positions of leadership and influence. Part of the long-term process of women being accepted in these roles as full contributing members of their organizations is an acceptance by men that women can lead. Pursuant to that end, the Services must ensure that the career progression patterns established for women officers include leadership and management development positions that will equip these officers with the skills necessary to lead and manage at the highest levels, in both joint and in-Service organizations.

The second area of interest focused on the optimum utilization of enlisted women across the full spectrum of occupational specialties. The historical role of women in each of the Services has been one of support type assignments in more traditional areas; i.e., administration, supply, medical, etc. In recent years, with the modification to statutory requirements and/or revisions to Service policies that opened many more non-traditional jobs to women, it was expected that women would seek to break new ground. While some women have taken advantage of expanded opportunities, the number of enlisted women who have volunteered for training and assignment in some non-traditional skill areas has been less than the available openings. There may be sociological explanations for this; nevertheless, the result has been a general imbalance in the percentages of women and men, compared to total end strength, across the traditional and non-traditional specialties. Career progression and promotion opportunity in some cases have already been affected. Of particular concern are about 1200 Navy enlisted billets on ships that are available to women but are currently filled by men.

Current and projected growth of the women in the Services and expanded opportunities in non-traditional skills make it highly desirable that more women be assigned to these non-traditional skills, which will require a major effort within the Services to integrate women more effectively into these specialties. While the problem is recognized by each Service, and professional management initiatives are underway to resolve it, particular emphasis must be paid to the task. Women should be made more aware of the career and promotional advantages for them in the non-traditional skill areas. They should be more actively encouraged to pursue careers in these areas. As more women come to understand and have confidence that they can make a real

contribution to mission accomplishment in non-traditional skills, their acceptance by their peers will be widened.

Apart from the foregoing, each Service may need to modify recruiting procedures to encourage women to enlist for non-traditional specialties and to ensure that the women who are enlisted possess the aptitudes that will maximize their opportunity for success in these specialties. Service Secretaries and Service Chiefs' personal attention and commitment to continued integration and acceptance of enlisted women in non-traditional specialties will be essential for resolution of the problem.

#### C. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our review, the Task Force recommends that the Secretary of Defense take the following action:

1. Direct the Secretaries of the Military Departments to address the issue of women officer leadership development and key billet/command assignment, along with each Chief of Service, as a matter of priority.

2. Direct the Secretaries of the Military Departments to develop a comprehensive plan to integrate non-traditional skill areas with enlisted women, with explicit focus on recruiting and assignment policies. These plans should be submitted to the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Force Management & Personnel) for review.